

- 301 originally came from the north-west. I imagine that the original possessors of these beads had considerable settlements in the neighbourhood of the Mangilia Hills, and that beads were continually being lost in the fields, and now when a heavy thunderstorm comes it washes some of the surface soil away and exposes an old bead now and again. The supply of the blue Nya-Luo beads is of course quite inadequate for the population, and many make up for the scarcity with the ordinary blue *Isiroti* beads. Occasionally these ancient beads are green and yellow, but the usual colour is blue.

- 302 The Ja-Luo have a curious habit of shaving curved patterns on their heads (Fig. 11).

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FIG. 11.—VIEW OF THE TOP OF A MAN'S HEAD; SHAVING NOW TWO CURVED IN AREAS.

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The young men often wear an armband of cylindrical wooden blocks on the upper arm; the wooden blocks are coloured red with oxide of iron. A band similarly ornamented with wooden blocks is often worn round the forehead. Some of the older men wear the curved canine tooth of a hippo on the forehead. The tooth is ground down laterally till it is only about one-eighth of an inch in thickness; others wear the tooth of a wart hog attached to a necklet.

The Ja-Luo have a curious habit of standing on the top of an apt hill or in some prominent place on one leg with the feet of the other feet resting against the knee, assuming one of the attitudes adopted by a stork; they will remain in this attitude quite comfortably for a considerable time. This habit is I believe characteristic of the Itaka and others of the tribes on the Nile north of Fashaka.

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Witchcraft, etc.—If a person shuts the door behind him when he leaves a house, people at once say he is a witch doctor. If a wife does this to her husband, the husband will not enter her house again until she fetches a goat from her father and kills it. Similarly if a man is the culprit he has to kill a goat to avert the ill luck. If a house is struck by lightning and anybody is killed inside, the head of the village walks three times round the house with a red rooster and the house is then broken up and the wood utilized for any purpose.

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Witchcraft, etc.—It is believed that people are killed by witchcraft; the person possessing the medicine has only to show it to a person in order to kill him; to save the person bewitched it is necessary to catch the wizard and to bring him to the patient and he can remove the spell, and the wizard has to pay a fine; this class of medicine men does not hide himself. There is a deeper kind of witchcraft which is only practised at night and with great secrecy. It is called *Jankings*; among the Gusi tribes many of the class previously referred to who forge iron possess these powers.

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With the kind assistance of Mr. C. H. Hall, of the British Museum, I examined the collections of beads at the Museum from various parts of the world, and I found yellow and blue beads of the exact colour and shape among the Egyptian antiquities and Jasper beads identical in appearance to the Nya-Luo both from ancient Egypt, and also from excavations made on the site of some buried cities in Babylonia.

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When a chief dies the son chosen by the chief succeeds him; the successor is chosen as a rule some years before the chief dies. The successor will however divide the private property of his father with his brothers like anyone else.

Religion.—They call the Divinity by the name Ching, which is the sun; when a man comes out of his house in the morning he spits to the east and in the evening he expectorates to the west. If the sunset is extremely red it is said to be a sign that an important man will die in the tribe. They believe that the spirit of a man goes upwards at death.

If a hailstorm comes no one goes to work in the fields on the following day. Shooting stars are said to be a sign of war.

[pp. 36-51 not processed]

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suffered an injury at the hands of certain other members of his clan, e.g., has had his wife snatched away or had a cow stolen, he will often proceed to the territory of a neighbouring tribe and lie in ambush, attack and spare the first passer by, likely to fall an easy prey, and will then return home.

In a few days it will look out that one of the "Wawa and so" has done this, and the clan of the murdered man will up and wage war with the clan of the murderer, who hopes to obtain his revenge viciously in this manner; latterly, it is said, it has been done in the hope that the administration will be induced to punish the clan, and, incidentally, the man who has wronged him.

As a variant of the same line of conduct during the last few years, several cases of suicide have been brought to my notice.

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For example, in Nyika district a young man one day had a violent quarrel with his own mother while cultivating, and eventually beat her with a stick. She ran crying to a village near by, and one of the elders came out and gave the young fellow a thrashing; to every one's astonishment the young man hanged himself that afternoon, and the people of the vicinity told my agent, who went to enquire into it, that he had committed suicide so that his blood relations might lay his death at the door of the elder, and thus start a blood feud against him. Word was, naturally, promptly sent forth that such a procedure would be stringently discouraged, and the incident apparently closed.

MISCELLANEOUS CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS.

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The Ja-Lao believe that the sun goes back to the east overhead during the night, hidden behind the horizon. They use the word *Ching* indifferently for sun and the Milky Way. They do not associate the daylight sky with the light of the sun, but look upon it as something quite distinct, and asked what became of it at night. It is known by the term *Pala*. They professed the belief that Europeans were the children of the sun.

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They believe that menstruation is caused by the new moon, and also that a woman can only become pregnant at the time of the new moon, and generally that the moon has a great deal to do with the occurrence.

During menstruation a woman does not cook food for others, but merely her own food. She performs all other work as usual.

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The people have no ceremonies connected with fire, such as the extinguishing of all the fire at a certain time, and the relighting with certain rites.

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Among the Awa-Wanga, many believe that within five or six days of the birth of a child the parents must cohabit, or the child will die. After the birth of twins, the parents are secluded for from twenty days to a month; at the end of the secluded period the brother of the man then formally opens the door of the hut and the couple can go about as usual. This seclusion of the male parent is probably an attenuated relic of the "seclude" custom.

together. It gains very few new converts and nearly all of these are natives who have broken away from a native-run Christian Mission known as the Nomiya Luo Mission, but these are not very numerous.

In conclusion I would like to offer my explanation of the nature of the "Snake" which swallowed Onyango. One morning in April this year while at Asambo location, on the Lake-shore, I happened to look out towards Homa Mountain on the other side of the Kavirondo Gulf. About a mile from the mountain and over the lake hung low a small bank of clouds. It was about half-past eight in the morning. From the centre of the clouds, and reaching down tenuously to the lake, twisting and swaying, hung a water-spout. The distance, some fifteen miles, made it difficult to estimate its height, but I think that a fair guess would be from 350 to 400 feet. I turned to my interpreter and said, "What do the wato make of that?" and he replied, "Oh, they say that that is the great snake Mumbo!"

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241 comes next, but in cotton soil, there is further preparation by breaking up the clods, getting a fine tilth. This is called "buen." I well remember my surprise, and critical attitude, when first I noticed that sowing was done without any attempt being made to break up the rough grass-matted clods. However, the crop, which happened to be "bel" or millet, which resulted from these primitive methods, was, a heavy one. I was told that the clods afforded protection to the young seedlings.

With regard to the sowing or planting three terms are used. Broadcast sowing, as of millet, simsim and beans, is called "chwyo" or "ludo." The planting of each seed individually, as with maize, is termed "komo," while the planting of cassava and sweet potatoes is known as "pidho."

241 Under the system now fast dying out, sowing was surrounded by
 825 many taboos. First of all, was the knowing the time to sow. In
 a normal year there are two sowings, one in the early part of the
 year, February or March, and one during the shorter rains about
 ●121 September-October. The slower growing crops were put down in the
 spring, and the quicker crops in the autumn. For the spring sowing
 guidance was sought from the stars. Amongst a people who had no
 names for the months of the year, natural phenomena had to be relied
 upon. These the stars supplied, and especially the constellations of
 Orion and the Pleiades. These two constellations are called by one
 name "Yugini" by the Luo. They further differentiate by calling
 the three stars of Orion's belt, the "chuo" or "men," and the cluster
 of the Pleiades the "mou" or "women." (The men are obviously
 polygamists.) When the time of the year comes round during which
 these stars are observed shortly after nightfall, to be about midway
 between the zenith and the horizon, then they know that sowing time
 has arrived. No matter how good the rains may have been before
 these stars reach the traditional position none must sow, and, con-
 versely, if rains do not come by the time the stars say that sowing
 ought to be done, there are dismal forebodings about the crop. The
 Luo say that if the millet (their main food crop), has not flowered by
 the month when these stars dip below the horizon shortly after night-
 fall, then there will be a poor harvest and scarcity of food.

241 Other natural phenomena which guide them are birds. There is
 825 a bird called by the Luo "Ondiek ti oyeng" ("the wild beasts are
 well fed") which has a very monotonous three note cry. Some
 Europeans call it the brain fever bird, from the deadly monotony of
 this call. The Luo have given words to this cry "Dak tu kom"
 meaning "Aren't you going to sow to-day." There is another bird,
 called "Oliech ga spol" which follows behind the digger for the insects
 turned up with the soil. The presence of these birds is held to

NILOTIC NEGROES

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husband and runs away, the amount which he has already paid on her behalf is returned and the marriage is broken off. If a woman finds herself unmarried after a long period, it is customary for her to go to a chief or a rich man and state that she has come to stay and cook for him. In such case she is usually taken to wife, but a very small complimentary present is paid for her. Chiefs may have from ten to forty wives. The Ja-luo are, generally speaking, very moral. They do not intermarry in

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494. MOVING THE FISH-BOATS (2-2-22)

the same clan, but a man may marry the daughter of one who bears the same name as himself.

The Ja-luo believe in a supreme God whom they call "Chieng." This, however, is the same name as the sun. When a man comes out of his house in the morning, he spits towards the east, and in the evening he spits towards the west. If the sunset is extremely red, it is said to indicate the approaching death of an important person. They believe that after death the spirits of the departed go up to the sky. If a hailstorm occurs, no one goes to work in the fields on the following day. Shooting stars are said to be a sign of war. They believe that people can be killed by witchcraft, and that a wizard has only to show "medicine" to a person